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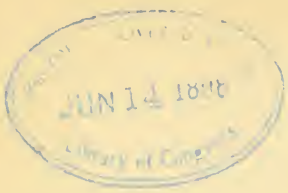
WAIFS FROM WILD MEADOWS

NELLE WOMACK



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WAIFS

FROM

WILD MEADOWS.

BY

NELLE WOMACK.

ATLANTA:
THE FOOTE & DAVIES COMPANY,
PRINTERS AND BINDERS.
1898.

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1898.

To

My Father and Mother.

WAIFS FROM WILD MEADOWS.

A GEORGIA SUNRISE.

I luv' ter git up mornin's when the chickins 'gin ter crow,
An' go out into the air so fresh an' still;
An' wander ter the meadows an' set down on a log,
An' watch ol' Georgy's sun clim' o'er the hill.

At fust, things seem so solemn, with a gray mist creepin' 'round,
An' the meadows sweet with clover at yer feet;
Yer may talk o' rose an' lilies, but I'll tell yer, ter my min',
Clover jes' beats all creation smellin' sweet!

An' the stars a-winkin', blinkin'—lookin' down with curious eyes,
As if they'd never see'd me thar before;
An' I've been ter that same place at least a hundred times,
An' I'm not so sho' but what it might be more.

See! a blush cums ter the eastern sky, as if it wus
ashamed,
An' then sum faintest streaks o' yaller-red,
Cum peepin' o'er the rim, jes' like a naughty boy
Skeared so bad that they wus nearly dead.

An' when they're mighty sho' the stars won't say,
"boo!"
They grow a little bigger an' more bold;
An' they look so all important, like they 'us warmin'
uv the way
Ter keep that big ol' sun frum ketchin' cold!

Now they're gittin' bigger fer they're swellin' with
their pride,
An' the sun's a-follerin' uv 'em close behin',
An' the fust thing yer know, its broad daylight,
An' a-gettin' purty close ter breakfast-time.

SOME SWEET DAY.

Some sweet day the stars will grow old,
And the sun will burn away;
Eternal rest will her wings unfold,
Some sweet day.

The dead will arise from their graves once more,
And their faces, pale and gray,
Will resume the brightness of long ago,
Some sweet day.

"When the leaves of the judgment book unfold,"
Our burdens will steal away,
Silently, as the Arabs of old,
Some sweet day.

Ah, sweet will it be for souls opprest,
When the angel of God shall say:
"Enter thou unto thy rest,"
Some sweet day.

A SONG OF JUNE.

June! and the roses with pleasure sway,
To live, to breathe, on such a day!
While their crimson sweetness and perfumed breath,
Grow faint with the dream of sweet June's death.

June! and glad is all the land,
With the magic touch of June's fair hand;
The humming-bird reels, and his wee bill drips
With the sweetness, sipped from the roses' lips!

June! and the green fern's netted lace,
Kisses the water's placid face;
Where star-eyed lilies dream away,
The hours of this summer's day.

June! and love has come to me—
From an unknown land beyond some sea;
Where eyes e'er smile, and hearts ne'er sever,
Where love e'er reigns, and 'tis June forever.

June! and my love's hand so fair,
Twines a white rose in her hair;
How my heart thrills! though now 'tis 'lone,
Some day 'twill call this love its own!

June! and the white rose her head bends,
To breathe the charm love's presence lends;
The drear doth ne'er with her abide,
'Tis always June when by her side!

June! and the whole world heaves a sigh,
To think that June should ever die;
Though months may pass 'neath Time's swift feet,
Still true to June our fond hearts beat!

MY LADY'S FAN.

My lady's fan is a wonderful thing!
Rare sieges it has stood—
'Tis a part of her—and thus betrays
My lady's every mood.

It has pressed my lady's tear-dimmed eye—
It has kissed her cheek aglow—
O feathery fan of my lady fair,
You have broken hearts galore!

It has sheltered my lady's blushing face
From my eye's tender light—
It has wafted me up to the realms of day,
And cast me back to night!

But—my lady's fan I'll ne'er forget,
Though all else from my mem'ry slips,
For 'twas first behind my lady's fan,
That I kissed my lady's lips!

THE WOMAN DEAD.

There was once a dead woman lying low
Alone in the mouldy ground;
And a rose-bush grew from her heart, to gaze
On the desolate waste around.

And the rose-bush said, "O woman dead!
Your lover comes each day;
And waters my bloom with the tears he sheds,
E'er he sadly goes his way."

And the woman dead rose out of her grave
And her still, calm face was pale;
And her clinging shroud and her tangled hair,
Blew out on the gathering gale!

Said the woman dead, "My love most true,
Is weeping his heart away;
But I'll go and tell him I love him still
And my lips on his lips lay."

But see! he a living woman holds
Close to his warm breast;
And says, "Oh yes, I loved—but she's dead—
Besides—I love you best."

And the gathering gale burst forth with a cry,
And sobbed and beat its breast!
And the dead woman said, as she lay in her grave,
"Thank God, I'm here at rest!"

A SILVER LININ'.

Hello, little girlie! what they bin a-doin' ter you,
The sun is quit a-shinin' an' yer 're feelin' kinder blue?
Why ain't yer heard that sayin', "a silver linin' hath every cloud?"
An' it's fer me an' you—thar now—smile an' look up proud,

An' I'll tell yer uv a secret: 'hind them clouds thar every one
Thar's an angel that's a-dippin' uv his brushes in the sun,
An' repaintin' all the linin's uv the clouds that's kinder old—
The folks, they say it's silver, but I'm purty sho' its gold.

Fer ain't yer ever noticed down about the western sky,
Ol' Sol sot in a bank o' clouds, like a king with sarvants nigh,
An' yer could see the linin's edges, wus it silver? wus it gold?
I don't need no specs ter tell me, though I am a-gittin' old!

Don't grieve an' fret that heart uv yours no longer,
little girl,
When the rainbow uv God's promise is a-bendin' o'er
this world;
An' if yer do yer best, be it dark or be it light,
You rest yer heart, yer Saviour 'll make it all come
right!

Look thar, little girlie, the sun has come out sho',
An' them shadows made the sunshine all the brighter,
don't yer kno';
An' the angels is a-fixin' up that cloud fer you an' me,
An' its linin' 'longs ter us, dear, gold or silver though
it be!

TOO LATE.

I lay still one night and they said I was dead,
My coffin with garlands wreathed;
And waxen flowers against my cheek,
Their faint, sweet perfume breathed.

But I was dead to the world alone,
As I lay in the glimmering light;
For I saw each face that hovered near,
And I heard each word that night.

But I was there at rest—at last,
Unheeded sped the time;
I only seemed to know and feel
That perfect rest was mine.

How often had I longed for this,
When I should be no more,
But silent, cold and lifeless lay,
No mortal pain to know!

And then—*you* bent above me,
Your tear-drops falling fast;
They burned into my very soul,
And brought me back the past!

You whispered that you loved me,
Had loved but me for years—
And my face was warm and wet, love,
With your kisses and your tears!

And then to feel I could not stir,
Not even raise my head—
Nor answer you with loving words,
That I—O God—was *dead!*

Why did you send me from you
With words of scorn and hate?
Now I'm dead—you say you love me,
But the knowledge comes—too late!

Unsatisfied my soul shall roam,
Through all eternity,
And my suffering shall be known,
Alone to God and me!

SOMEWHERE—SOMETIME.

I only know, somewhere, somewhere,
Beneath God's glorious skies;
That a maiden sweet
Awaits to greet
Me with tender love-lit eyes.

I only know, sometime, sometime,
In the happy is-to-be;
  This maiden fair
  With wind-blown hair,
Will wander home to me.

I only know, my love, my love,
In sunshine and cloudy weather;
  Thou, maiden sweet,
  And my willing feet,
Will wander through life together.

LIFE'S WORK.

One day I prayed (though God knew best)
That He send to me His Angel of Rest;
For I longed with a heart all burden-sore,
To dwell with my Saviour forevermore.

Oh, that sense of freedom from earthly care,
As my soul sprung out into God's pure air!
But, looking back to my body dead,
I beheld a map before me spread.

And there I saw with eyes anew,
The work each mortal had to do
And suffer, ere Heaven's gates were won;
I looked, and lo! mine was left undone!

I turned to the angel in dumb surprise,
And read the sad light in his sorrowing eyes;
"Oh, Angel of Death, return I pray—
Let me finish my work ere I go my way!"

A look of joy lit up his face,
As back to my body's resting-place
Our spirits flew; and I came back to life,
With heart anew for the worldly strife.

Now I'm content to work and to pray,
And to live in my Master's mapped-out way;
For I know some day with the setting sun,
He'll call me home when my work is done.

THE FIRE FIEND.

Oh, the Fire Fiend's out in the town to-night,
(And the wind blows hard and strong)
And he shrieks and he laughs with a fierce delight
At the sight of faces pale with fright,
As he leaps with the wind along.

Oh, the Fire Fiend's come to the town again,
(For his hot breath fills the air)
And he laps his arms 'bout the homes of men,
O God, in mercy and pity bend,
And hear the people's prayer!

Oh, the Fire Fiend's out in the town to-night,
(Though the people are working fast)
And he kisses a cheek with his scorching breath,
Then flings it down to the jaws of death
To meet its God at last.

. . . . .

Oh, the Fire Fiend came to the town last night,
(It once was a town at least)
But the pitying sun's soft rays fall down
On one vast, blackened, smoking mound,
To show where he had his feast.

VALENTINES A-COMIN'.

With Valentines a-comin', an' the sky a-showin' blue,
With jes' enough o' clouds ter keep the sun a-peepin' through;

An' every little violet a-tryin' uv its best,
Ter hold its head up higher, an' smell sweeter 'en the rest;
With that Valentine a-comin' frum one that's good an' true,
An' you a-lovin' them as hard as they're a-lovin' you;
What more now *could* yer want ter keep yer happiness in swing?
'Cep' a mortgage on the earth, an' a fence a-roun' the thing.

Sum folks they never seem ter know jes' when they git enough,
An' never quit, but rake an' scrape' an' pack an' jam an' stuff;
An' still they keep a-reachin' out, uv gold they're wantin' more,
But if they jes' would look a-roun' it's lyin' 'bout the floor,
Fer the sunshine's allus golden, an' the violets at yer feet
Keeps a-sendin' up their perfume, 'tel it almos' makes *you* sweet;

An' with Valentines a-comin', now fer what more *could* yer sing?
'Cep' that mortgage on the earth, an' a fence a-roun' the thing.

But that has allus been the way, frum Adam's time tel now
A feller never got a house but what he'd want a cow;
No sooner would the cow be thar, before a mule he'd buy,
An' if sum sheep he couldn't git, he knowed he'd sho'ly die;
But giv' ter me the sunshine an' the skies a-smilin' so,
With violets a-noddin' as the breezes com' an' go,
An' Valentines a-comin' frum yer loved ones an' the rest,
An' *I'll* not want a blamed thing else, but think I'm wondrous blest!

REGRET.

Dear heart, I do not blame you,
We reap as we have sown;
Not being worthy of your love,
It has taken wings and flown;

But I have dearly loved you,
More, with each passing hour,
But you can't expect a butterfly
To love a sombre flower.

But, oh, to think as day after day
Into the dead past slips,
I'll feel no pressure of your hand
Or the touch of your dear lips!
I wonder that I do not die
With vain and mad regret!
What is it that you answer?
Forget, sweetheart, forget?

When for the last time on this earth
The sons of men have met—
When the last pale moon has risen,
That day will I forget!
Forget—that you ceased to love me,
Remember—I love you yet,
And wandering through eternity,
The past—we'll both forget!

ONE DAY.

IN MEMORY OF F. A. U.

One sad day, when the earth was fair
God said to an angel waiting there:
"Go thou to earth to my garden of flowers,
And search ye most careful in all of its bowers;
And bring me a rose, one lovely--dear,
That I may transplant to my garden up here."

Swift-winged the angel took his flight,
And reached the garden one sad night,
And searched. At last, a rose found there,
Full-blown, perfect and most fair;
Then gently plucked the fragrant flower,
To bloom again in Heaven's bower.

One sad day, we were left to weep,
For the lovely rose we could not keep;
But humbly say: "He knoweth best;
He has taken the flower with Him to rest!"
And the pale dew wept at set of sun,
And whispered soft, "Thy will be done!"

One glad day when the earth is fair,
More flowers will be culled for the garden there;
And the rose by the angel taken in flight,
From this dark earth to the Land of Light,
Will be found still blooming, more sweet, more dear,
Than the day it was plucked from the garden here.

THE MYSTICAL RIVER.

There's a mystical river in the far-away,
And it borders an unknown land;
And countless throngs, though unaware,
Are walking along the strand.

A little child is drawing near,
On the brink she takes her stand,
With a puzzled look in her serious eyes,
As she watches a beckoning hand.

But a sweet voice calls, "Come over, my child,"
She starts, and pauses no more,
But fixes her sweet eyes on the shadowy form
That stands on the other shore.

But hark! Hear that shriek that startles the air,
And there, trembling, stands a man,
With horror and fear in his eyes as he looks
Across to the unknown land!

Then 'tis over. A woman now slowly comes forth,
Most slowly—and falters oft,
While dim eyes gaze as if to pierce
The mystic veil. Then soft

A voice falls on the evening air,
"And the weary are at rest,"
Then a sweet smile steals across her face,
As she sinks to the river's breast.

Some sweet day in the far away
We'll all cross that shining strand,
And pass over the Mystical River of Death,
And explore that Unknown Land;

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,"
And the world-worn soul opprest,
Will be lightened of all its burden,
"And the weary will be at rest."

TWILIGHT.

The day is dead; but still faint streaks of crimson, blue and gold,
Are mingled 'mong the western clouds, as if a painter bold
Had dipped his brush into the sun, and borrowed of the sky,
But got his colors all mixed up and put them on awry.

And then, as if not satisfied, he into a passion flew—
And here and there you see great dabs of red or a golden hue—
Until sweet night her sable curtain o'er them gently lay,
And they slowly, slowly, melt and fade, and die with the closing day.

Then the shadows close around you and hem in twilight's hour,
And you see the diamond drops agleam on the upturned face of a flower;

And I haven't a doubt but you think it's dew—but I'll
tell you what they said;
That they were the tears that the stars had shed,
because of the day that's dead!

From the daisied dell the soft, sad mourn of a dove
doth slowly creep,
And the new moon shines with a hazy light, and the
stars come out to peep.
Then the faint sound of a bell comes o'er from the lea
where you often roam,
And the shadows creep still closer and the cows are
coming home.

Then a feeling of sad, sweet sorrow that is more of
pleasure than pain,
Comes gently stealing o'er you, and then is gone
again!
And you can not tell, and will never know just why
that feeling was born—
But now the night has come to reign, and twilight
hour is gone!

LARNIN' TER RIDE.

I never knowed much o' hardships,
An' little o' human pride,
'Tel I went an' bought a bisickle,
An' started ter learn ter ride;
They told me all I had ter do
Wus jes' ter balance the thing,
An' jes' ter keep on peddlin',
An' she'd go like a bird on wing.

I'll never forgit the fust time
I got up on the seat;
I got all twisted an' tangled up,
Guess I wus too much feet;
An' when the thing 'ud go ter fall
I'd turn it t'other way—
Then, Cæsar! I'd hav' a chance
Ter view the stars by day!

One time the critter run away—
Me grippin' the handle-bars,
If I couldn't stop the thing, I knew
I'd land up 'mong the stars;

We didn't go more 'en ten miles
Er maybe a leetle futher,
Then over we pitched in a ten-foot ditch,
An' yer couldn't tell which wus tother!

Thar war'n't a rock er stump, but what
That blamed thing 'ud see it sho',
'Twould run like mad, me cussin' hard,
An' over we both 'ud go!
Larned yet? Wall no—yer see I've bin
Ter the dry dock fer repairs!
The bisickle? Oh, it's still in the ring,
But I've got it chained down upstairs!

TWO GRAVES.

There's a grass-green grave 'neath a willow tree,
With daisies growing nigh,
And a slim, white slab, with solemn mien,
Looks up to the summer sky.
And the breeze makes love to the daisy,
While the daisy bends its head,
And the cool dew rains upon the grave
Of this woman lying dead.

. . . . .

There's a grave of my dear, lost love that's hid
  Deep in this heart of mine—
The world may see that grave out there—
  But of this I make no sign,
But silently mourn I for my love.
  The woman? Do I e'er regret?
Ah! no, for *she* was as false as sin!
  But the *love*—I can't forget.

PICTURES IN THE FIRE.

It always sets me dreaming,
When I see the firelight gleaming,
  And vague shadows chase each other on the wall;
I want no other light there,
Just the coals that shine so bright there,
  To dream of you is best life after all.

Now I see a cozy nest, love,
Where I so would like to rest, love,
  O'er the door the honeysuckles all a-climb;
There's some one in the door, love,
And my heart is running o'er, love,
  For I dream that it is you—and you are mine!

The dream makes me forget, sweet,
But then comes the old regret, sweet,
My heart would break for just one glimpse of you.
My lips are aching so, sweet,
For touch of yours once more, sweet,
But firelight fades—I know it can't come true.

Old-time longing comes again, dear,
Once more your presence lend, dear,
That I may dream you live—mine as of yore;
Some day I'll read your eyes, dear,
And see the glad surprise, dear,
'Twill be worth the years of waiting that I bore.

AFTER THE DANCE.

Tread softly, my lady is thinking,
As she sits in the firelight dim;
Speak gently, my lady is dreaming,
And her dreams are—of him—of him!
And of how at the dance this evening
He held her hand so tight,
While dark eyes looked love into blue ones,
As they stepped the measures light.

Of how, in the starlit garden,
  Her heart on his soft words hung;
How her cheeks grew rosy with blushes
  At hearing their praises sung;
And of how—what, *tears*, my lady?
  Why, surely you didn't cry!
It must have been the starlight
  That sparkled in your eye.

. . . . .

There's no telling what joy will bring us,
  And maybe the tear was right;
And I'm sure 'tis a tear I see now
  As she murmurs, "God keep him this night!"

FAITH.

A weary woman onward pressed,
  Nor did she note the gathering night;
A cross she bore, nor paused to rest,
  Though hot tears dimmed her dark'ning sight.

Still tired eyes, with vacant stare,
Sought the beacon light on high;
"God give me strength my cross to bear,"
The white lips moaned with heavy sigh.

The night comes down; soon thunders thick
Peal out; the rain pours hard;
In the heavens the lightning's flashes quick
Paint the anger of an outraged God.
From the woman's lips there falls a prayer,
As she clasps her cross to her aching side,
"O God, for strength this cross to bear!—
For strength to bear it to thy side!"

"Dear Lord, I by thy will abide,"
The sad eyes now no longer weep,
For there upon the mountain-side
God lets her gently fall to sleep.
And when she wakes—oh, heavenly light!—
Her glad eyes gaze in wonder 'round.
Her cross is gone—'tis no longer night—
And at her feet she finds a crown!

TURNOVERS.

Yer may talk o' pies an' puddin's,
O' dumplin's, tarts an' cake;
But they're not "in it" 'longside apple
Turnovers my ma used ter make.

I've eat a lots o' sweet things
That the foreign "chefs" do bake;
They don't set my mouth a-waterin' like
Turnovers my ma used ter make.

When I cum home in the evenin'
Frum school so tired an' hot,
I'd take me a hand o' turnovers
An' go set on the fence at the lot.

An' listen ter the whip-per-will singin'
An' the cry o' poor "Bob White,"
As he'd say so sad an' mournful
An' soft, "Are yer peas all ripe?"

I'd begin ter feel so drowsy,
An' the breeze so cool an' sweet,
That after I eat my turnovers,
I'd almos' go ter sleep.

An' onct I did, an' dreamed
Uv sum Injuns I'd shot dead,
An' I fell clean off that blamed lot-fence
An' almos' broke my head!

But oh, them apple turnovers!
That my ma used ter make,
In spite o' pies an' puddin's, ter me,
They'll allus "take the cake!"

ONLY.

Only a little hasty word—
Then a gleam of sad surprise,
And two big diamond tear-drops
Shine in the darling's eyes;
Only the sound of a stifled sob
As the tear-drops fall away,
And the echo of a footstep faint,
As she sadly goes to play.

Only a little rose-flushed face
That glows in a frame of gold;
Only two thin, wasted arms—
Two hands that are damp and cold;

Only a heart that is breaking,
Beneath His will divine,
Only a soul that cries and pleads,
"God, spare this child of mine!"

Only a little daisied mound
Beneath the starlight dim,
Only the voice of a mocking-bird
As it sings a requiem;
Only a flood of silent tears
That bathes the daisy's head,
Only a sobbing voice that cries
Aloud for its precious dead!

Only a little fairy form
Robed in purest white,
Upward borne by angel hands
Out of the land of night;
Only a happy little face
In a halo of shining hair;
One more soul in the spirit-band
When the angels go to prayer.

A LOVE-SONG.

Why do I love you? I can't tell you, sweet;
I love you for everything!
For the clover that's leaning and kissing your feet,
For the birds that in joyousness sing!

For the sunny light in your gold-brown hair,
For that curl behind your ear;
For the coral red on your lips so rare,
For your soul that is crystal clear.

For the rose that hides blushing (she knows *you* are near),
While her sweetness the honey-bee sips;
But all he could gather in a thousand years
Could be found in *one* kiss from your lips!

For the light in your eyes that brings me rest,
(God grant we may never part!)
But I love you last, and sweetest, and best,
Because you are *mine*, sweetheart!

DEATH'S COMING.

Death came to my door and knocked one night
(But Life was a guest therein);
"To live! to live!" was my soul's loud cry,
"'Tis sweet to live, I can not die
Leave me till you come again!"

Death came to my door again and knocked
(But Love was a guest that day);
"Oh! heart of my heart, my love, my life,
How can I leave you to toil, to strife?
Death, spare me again, I pray!"

Death came again to knock at my door
(But Contentment abode in my hall);
"I have Life, I have Love, and contented I be,
O Death, you're unwelcome, you're loathsome to me!
Leave now, and another time call!"

. . . . .

Death cometh not now to knock at my door
(For Sorrow there singeth her song),
And I list and I long with a heart that is sore,
For his step, for his voice, for his knock at the door;
How long must I wait, Death—how long?

GOOD-BY.

Good-by! Oh, must it be good-by?
Must this poor heart of mine
Thy cold looks bear, and with no sigh
Tear from its sacred shrine
All love, all tender thoughts of you,
Nor leave the smallest part,
And thus—this late—to plant anew
The garden of my heart?

Good-by! Ah, love, shall years and years
Their pains and sorrows bring—
Shall the purple twilight's fall of tears
Oft drop 'neath Night's black wing—
Shall the moonbeam's ghost of a kiss oft fly
From a rose to a lily near—
Without one glimpse into your sweet eye
Or a touch from your hand, dear?

Good-by! my heart shall still be true,
Be it not otherwise—
I've only lived since loving you,
Since looking in your eyes!

My heart and I shall bury deep
Each tender look; somewhere
Within some sacred precinct keep
Them hidden ever there!

Good-by! Be still, she's gone, my heart,
Out of our lives. No sigh
She gave, or look, or tear, or smart,
Nor heard our stifled cry!
Now heart, we'll lock the casket lid,
No sign the world shall see
Of the love that 'neath its cover's hid;
Then—we'll live in the use-to-be!

GEORGIA CHEEK.

I've heared to-day a curious thing,
An' I don't know what ter say—
It beats anything that I hav' heared
In many an' many a day!

They say sum bloomin' ijiot's
Been knockin' 'round in the cold
Away up north, an' sum'eres thar
Run agin the old North Pole.

Believe it? Dun'no—but I believe
In things bein' square an' fair;
An' if they've really found it,
We're gywin' ter hav' our share!

You wait—an' sum old Georgy tack
(An' if he don't he'll most),
'Ll git a piece an' bring it back
Ter use as a hitchin' post.

LIFE AND DEATH.

God's glorious skies above you,
And hearts that fondly love you,
Flowers blooming sweetly—close of strife;
The sunshine warmly beaming,
Or the moonlight's tender gleaming,
And your motto, "On and upward;"
That is Life!

When hearts you thought had loved you
Prove false; and the heavens above you
Are darkened by the storm king's fierce-blown breath;

And you do not see the gleaming
Of the mercy light that's streaming
From the gates of Heaven ajar;
That is Death!

WEARY.

I'm weary, so weary of wand'ring
Out in the cold and the night,
Tired, how tired of living
Out of the warmth and the light;
I'm weary and waiting and willing,
Ready my Saviour to meet,
There to lay down my burden,
And forever rest at His feet.

I'm weary, so weary of waiting
Out in the storm to roam,
Weary and waiting and list'ning,
For the summons, "Child, come home!"
Willing and waiting and longing,
To spring to my Master's breast,
To feel His dear arms about me,
And to hear His whispered, "Rest."

A LULLABY.

The night wind's breath comes sweet and slow,
And pauses to list to a crooning low,
That hushes a babe's soft cry;
For stilled are the tiny, weary feet,
As close to her breast it slumbers sweet,
To mother's own lullaby.

The night wind's breath comes fierce and fleet,
As it follows the storm king's swift-winged feet,
And stifles a mother's cry;
For the babe has entered the Garden of Sleep,
On the breast of a lily it slumbers sweet,
To an angel's lullaby.

Hush, poor mother! the thorn is sharp,
But list to the sound of the wind-blown harp,
As it sings with a gladdened cry;
Some day you'll enter the Garden of Rest,
And close to your babe on the lily's breast,
Hear God's own lullaby.

LOVE.

A maddened horse, a helpless form,
A wild dash down the street,
A sudden spring, the horse has stopped,
A still form's 'neath its feet!

God looked down from heaven and smiled,
And He knew 'twas not the end,
For "no greater love hath man than this:
That he lay down his life for his friend."

BROWN'S VIEW OF THE X-RAY.

What will the people invent next?
I jes' would like ter know,
It 'pears ter me they've got enough—
But still they're 'ventin' more.
Fer now I hear some German chap,
(Lord, help him fer a sinner!)
Has 'vented a thing ter look yer through,
An' see what yer et fer dinner!

Blinds? jes' well tak' 'em down,
They ain't no circumstance!
Shingles don't stan' no showin',
An' a door ain't got no chance!
Jes' well not ter hav' no house—
It's rilin' ter me, sho'—
Fer every time yer wash yer face
Yer neighbor'll hav' ter know!

An' when the parson cums ter tea
An' yer happen ter carve yer hand,
Gee whiz! them cuss words in yer head,
Will show up like a man!
Onions an' spice won't do no more—
Ter drink will sho' be risky,
Fer Mary Ann 'll look *right straight*
An' see that quart o' whisky.

An' when she wants an Easter hat,
An' ax's me fer the money,
An' I say, "I ain't got *nary* cent
Er you could hav' it, honey,"

She'll take an X ter find an X,
  Bet your life she will,
An' say, "You Ebenezia Brown!
  Fork over that ten-dollar bill!"

Never wuz much on kickin', but be blanked,
  If I don't do sum now;
I'll git up a repetation
  Worse 'en our ol' brindle cow!
An' if I jes' had that Rœntgen—
  Er whatever his name is—
I'd fix him so yer could see through *him*
  Without them rays o' his!

A RED ROSE'S LOVE.

All day I lay in the glow of the sun,
  And flirted with the bumble-bees;
And my crimson cheek took a deeper hue,
  As I swayed to the arms of the passing breeze.

All night I drowsily watched the stars,
  And bathed in the Lady Moon's shimmering light;
Till the dew-drops that lay on my blushing face
  Grew pale 'neath the smile of the queen of night.

Ah! once a vision I beheld,
I know not, be it day or night;
I only know I swooned away,
In the very fervor of delight!

And when I awoke—ah, me! ah, me!
Shall I ever forget my passion wild?
And my cheek grew pale as her proud lips
Were pressed to my face a little while.

And then I reigned with the queen that night,
As I lay 'midst the curls of her midnight hair,
And men praised the beauty of the red, red rose,
But gazed at the rose on her cheek so rare.

And men would have gladly given worlds
To have been one moment proud, happy me,
To have felt one touch of her perfumed lips,
To have died in a passion of ecstasy.

TO-MORROW.

Sad heart, how long must this thing last?
Thou lying in silent gloom,
Stirring the ashes of a dear dead past
Smoldering in Memory's tomb!

Thou hast no time to linger here
Bear up, O faint, weak heart!
Thy day of joy may now be near,
Thou and yesterday must part.

To-day is thine. And see, sad heart,
Life's sun is climbing fast!
Do well the task that is thy part
Unfettered by the past;

For lo! a glorious star yon gleams
No light of pain or sorrow,
And lying 'neath its sweetest beams,
Thou'll dream of sweet To-morrow.

ELLEYN.

Stars, O stars! ye jewels bright,
That begem the midnight brow of night!
Two of your number have flown I ween,
And shine as the eyes of sweet Elleyn.
Bless her,
Caress her,
Dear starlight!

O Lady Moon! thou languid queen!
As into the arms of Night you lean;
Your shimmering light's not half so fair,
As the shining sheen of Elleyn's hair!
Bless her,
Caress her,
Sweet Elleyn!

Night! Night! bend low and lean,
And fold to your heart my sweet Elleyn!
Nor even let that sprite the breeze,
Steal from her lips *one* kiss (the tease)!
Bless her,
Caress her,
Sweetheart! Queen!

THE SHIP OF FATE.

Alone I stand beside this sea—
With cold hands pressed
'Gainst throbbing breast,
Waiting for what the end may be.

Warm with longing, cold with fear,
Hoping, yet dreading the end so near;
And a phantom ship on a phantom sea
Sailing the west from my hopes and me.

Proudly she breasts Death's dark'ning wave;
  Now bravely stands
  At Fate's commands,
Then sinks to the depths of a treacherous grave;
But swift as hope, her sails aglow,
From the gloom of this grave she rises once more;
This phantom ship of a phantom sea,
As a new-born star comes back to me.

Anon a sea-gull's cry I hear,
  As white wings part
  With sudden start,
The falling night that hovers near;
Yet still I watch with hope, with fear,
With many a smile, with many a tear,
This phantom ship on a phantom sea;
The ship of my fate—my destiny!

LADY APRIL.

That April is a lady with a fickle min' they say,
But I'd ruther tak' my chances 'long with 'er any day
'En any o' the other months that happen 'round this way;
Fer April's skies is bluest,
An' April's eyes is truest,
Oh, April is a lady that's wurth any songster's lay.

We all forgit the winter's wind when April's face appears,
The birds all hunt their tune-books, the flowers forget their fears,
An' we all 'ill welcome April, though we know she'll box our years;
Fer April's skies is brightest
An' April's heart is lightest,
'En let her box—she'll kiss the hurt, an' I'd like ter know who keres.

Sumtimes she'll be a-smilin' like there war'n't no ache or pain.
Look-out! her tears 'ill drench yer, she'll soon be raisin' Cain!

But we all 'ill soon forgit; keep lovin' jes' the same;
Fer April's eyes is truest,
An' April's skies is bluest,
An' sumhow—without April livin' 'ud be pretty tame.

Although she will git frownified an' shut them eyes o' blue,
Still now an' then yer ketch a glimpse o' laughter peepin' through;
An' sumhow yer forgive 'er, now don't yer? Ain't it true?
Fer April's skies is bluest,
An' April's eyes is truest,
An' April's skies and eyes is good enough fer me an' you.

The birds begin a-callin' ter each other from the hills,
An' the flowers 'gin ter primp in looking-glasses o' the rills;
An' my heart is nigh ter bustin'—but joy never kills,
But our eyes are allus brightest,
An' our hearts are allus lightest,
When Lady April curls 'er hair an' fixes up 'er frills.

DEAR HEART.

Dear heart, there is no sunshine
  That comes from heaven's sky,
So tender and life-giving
  As love's welcome from your eye!

Dear heart, there is no shower
  The thirsting earth e'er sips,
So thrilling and refreshing,
  As love's kisses from your lips!

Dear heart, there is no gladness
  Doth on God's earth abide,
That can compare with life, love,
  When spent by your dear side!

SHADOWS.

IN MEMORY OF J. F. H.

What though the day be shadowed
  And darkness hovers nigh,
And storm-clouds fly by swiftly
  Across a leaden sky;

When past their dense black thickness
The sun shines evermore,
And the brightness seems the sweeter
For the gloom that went before.

What though our lives be shadowed
And full of pain and grief,
And dark clouds never brighten
With the sunlight of relief;
When we know one day eternal,
Though dreary be the while,
We'll bask in God's own glory
And the sunshine of His smile.

What though our loved ones leave us,
To breast the world alone,
With none but God and the shadows
To hear us make our moan;
When some sweet day of waiting
Our loved one's kiss we'll meet,
And thank God for His goodness
While kneeling at His feet.

FOREVER AND AYE.

She lies on a couch that's soft as down;
As she slumbers, the roses sweet
Are drowsily humming with Mother Night
As she sings the world to sleep.
And she dreams of her lover far over the sea,
For she prayed e'er to rest she lay,
"God, watch o'er my love, and some sweet time,
Let us meet forever and aye."

He lies on the shore of a far-away sea,
In a deep and a dreamless sleep;
Unheard is the mermaid's plaintive song
And the wild waves kiss his feet;
Watched o'er by God's sentineled star-gemmed sky
Thus the answered prayer: Some day
In the future dim and in God's own time,
They'll meet forever and aye.

A GEORGY MULE.

You've never seed one, stranger?
You must be frum the North;
If yer ain't hearn tell uv a Georgy mule,
Yer live a fur ways off!

'Scribe him? Jes' well try
Ter 'scribe a lightnin' streak—
But he kin do more work in half a day
'En most mules in a week.

Wall, he's jes' 'bout middlin' sized
An' slender 'bout the neck—
Looks like he'd taken anti-fat
With quite a good effect—
But bet he could kick that 'bacca
Slick as greese frum out yer mouth!
Them 'eres the kind o' mules we raise
Down here in the sunny South.

Kick? He kin jes' beat *anything*,
You don't know nothin' a-tall;
He kin kick all day an' kick all night,
An' kick 'til late in fall;
He kin kick the roof frum off the house,
Tear up a big buzz-saw,
An' if yer 've got a job fer him
He kin kill yer mother-in-law.

Gentle? Wall now, stranger,
You're a LEETLE too much fer me,
Fer that's *one* thing about a mule
Yer can't quite tell, yer see;
But I hearn tell uv a mule what worked
Fer years, both days an' nights,
Jes' ter git ter kick his boss
Up ter the starry heights!

A SONG OF NIGHT.

Many years ago when the world was young,
And the stars together His glory sung,
God made Day doff her colors bright
And put on mourning; and He called her Night.

E'en now when the golden crown of the sun
Is fast disappearing and the day's most done,
Her sable gown she soon slips on,
For her lover so fickle, the sun that's gone.

And she weeps cool tears. They're the dew that falls;
Then loud and clear to the stars she calls
For a mad, mad dance; and she leads on
And tries to forget her lover that's gone.

But the wise little stars heed not her call,
For they say if they leave, God's floor will fall;
For didn't you know that the stars so bright,
Were the nails that held Heaven's flooring tight?

So Night has to leave her dance too soon,
In vain tries to flirt with the man in the moon,
And how her heart aches! With what longing yearns!
She'd best go to rest till her lover returns!

Then a sweet, solemn stillness comes creeping o'er all,
And a silvery shower's beginning to fall;
As on the faces of flowers the moon doth pour
Her passionate kisses—more and yet more.

Then a rustling of leaves in a sycamore tree,
And a mocking-bird's song as soft as can be,
Comes floating on moonshine—now swift and now slow—
Till it rests in the heart of a rose down below.

Night awakes: she turns pale; her black garment slips off;
She must meet her dear lord in a gown gray and soft;
And when he looks up from his couch of sweet rest,
Night has vanished—Day springs to his breast!

SOME DAY.

Some day, some day, when the sun is low,
And the length'ning shadows gather slow;
  And the birds doth sing
  And the breeze doth sigh,
  And the perfume of flowers floateth nigh.
Ah me! ah me! but low I'll lay,
'Neath the green, green grass, and the cold, dark clay.
Will the day e'er seem less bright, less fair,
To the loved ones left in waiting there?

Some day, some day, when the earth is drear
And the muttering thunder's sound comes near,
  And the lightnings flash
  And the rain doth pour,
  Upon the earth I'll see no more.
Ah me! ah me! from the warmth and light,
Will their thoughts e'er turn out to the night?
Will a tear be shed for the still, cold form
Out alone with the night and the storm?

A CHANGE UV WEATHER.

I never seed such weather since I've been livin', sho';
It's as much as a feller's life is wurth ter git outside
the door,
An' the sun, he's had the measles, uv that thar ain't no
doubt,
Fer he's feared uv a relapse an' won't even stick his
ol' nose out.
An' the birds, they ain't a-singin', 'pears like thar's
sumthin' wrong,
An' the violets ain't a-bloomin'; tain't bin so very long
Since I seed their star-eyes peepin' like violet drops o'
rain,
An' I brung 'em home ter Mary (wonder when she'll
cum agin?)—
Now thar's them honeysuckles over thar by the win-
dow-place,
Jes' a-droopin' an' a-dyin' fer the sight uv a woman's
face;
An' when I set at night thar on the front steps all
alone,
The hot tears keep a-droppin', wishin' Mary wuz at
home.

Drat it! thar's that door-bell; who in the mischief kin
it be
A-comin' here such weather? it's more 'en I kin see;
Sum folks ain't got no conscience—what is it that yer
say?
A letter! Why I ain't had one since Mary went away!

Glory, hallelulya! hear what this has got ter say:
"Dear John, when you git this here note, I'll be home
the next day."
Whoop! gimme my ol' hat here, I want ter shout an'
sing;
This is such *glorious* weather an' I'm happy as a king.

The birds has found their tune-books an' a-singin'
strong an' loud,
An' the rainbow is a-bendin' an' a-kissin' every cloud.
Beastly weather, did you say? Why, man, yer're off
yer track;
It's the *heavenliest kind* o' weather, an' Mary's a-com-
in' back.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER.

The ghost of a man walked the earth one night,
While the fierce wind tangled his hair;
And he wrung his hands and his dark, weird eyes
Blazed bright with a wild despair.

This ghost of a man was praying fast,
And these were the words he said:
"O God! I couldn't conceive on earth
Of such punishment for the dead.

"What deed did I do that I'm compelled
This fearful sight to see;
The misery of those on earth
Dear as my soul to me;

"I see my wife starving, almost,
And out in the storm and the cold,
And I long with unutterable longing her form
Into my arms to fold.

"O God, my one prayer answer me,
Ere her heart breaks with pain;
Let her feel my arms about her,
Let her know I'm with her again!

"Then do as thou wilt with me,
I'll by thy will abide;"
Then the storm-fiend passed by wailing—
That night the woman died.

MARJORIE.

TO M. W. W.

Marjorie, baby Marjorie,
With crumpled rose-leaf lips,
Through which, gently breathing,
The dawn of a new life slips;
Methinks, the angels sleeping,
One sunny April day
You crept through the door of Heaven
And a cloud bore you away.

Marjorie, little Marjorie,
With twin pansy dew-drop eyes,
Is it true you sometimes see those
You left behind the skies?

Do they, in your dreaming,
Whisper words of love,
And tell you how they miss you
In their playhouse above?

Marjorie, sweetest Marjorie,
With darling dimpled chin,
I've wondered what could have happened
To set that dimple in.
Listen: when an angel
Kissed your brow and hair,
And then your chin, he kissed so hard,
He left that dimple there.

Marjorie, baby Marjorie,
We thank God every day
That of His spirit-children, you, the sweetest,
He sent this way,
And as I kiss your smiling mouth
And rosy, dimpled chin,
I gaze into your eyes and catch
A glimpse of Heaven therein.

THAT PICNIC.

Oh, picnic time in Georgia! I tell yer, aint it fine?
Fer a day in the woods—an' dinner's—jes' suited ter my min'.
Lay down an' look up through the trees, the sky a-showing through,
'Pears like a crazy quilt pieced out o' scraps o' green an' blue.
I went ter one the other day; I was jes' tuck along
Ter kinder sorter fill up; didn't think I'us doin' wrong,
An' after we all got thar an' every one wus out,
I set down on a pine stump an' thought I'd look e'bout.

The birds they wus a singin' an' a-makin' lots o' noise,
And the leaves they wus a-sighin' like luv-sick girls an' boys;
Then by-an'by I woke up an' looked from left to right,
If you believe what I've to say, thar warn't a soul in sight!
Then I started out ter search fer 'em, an cum upon a pair,
But they looked jes' like they'd like ter fight, with me ter furnish hair.

Then—the next smiled kinder sick-like, axed me ter
hav' a seat,
Then looked as if they'us hungry an' wanted me ter eat!

'Twas "spoon, spoon, spoon," with nary a star or moon,
'Tel I cum ter the conclusion 'twas time for me ter
"spoon";
So I run agin a freezer, an' down on the ground I set,
With a couple o' spoons—an' didn't I spoon? Wall,
yes, you'd better bet!
Next time I bet them spooners 'ill take it turn erbout,
Watch me so I'll not git a chance ter spoon their ice-
cream out;
But then they needn't bother, fer I tell you, I've al-
lowed,
That I'll not picnic agin soon erlong with a "spoony"
crowd.

TO AN OLD MINIATURE.

As I gaze on your eyes, dark beauty
My lady, most weird, most fair;
I would I might read the secrets,
That are lying imprisoned there;

Your name—I would so like to know it—
Was it Mignonette, Mabel or Claire?
No name could be ever half worthy
Of a lady so dainty, so fair!

And your lovers—how did you e'er count them?
I'm sure must have been by the score,
For men could not have eyes, and have used them,
And remained from your side, that I know.
And the duels? Ah! now your eyes lighten,
I suspect there're a dozen or so
(For a week you'd, perchance, mourn his memory,
And call him your dead hero).

And then, at last—did you marry?
Was it love, or gold gave you name?
Ah, I see a faint mocking smile spreading,
O'er the lips that love's kisses should claim!
Pshaw! e'en as I am, my lady
I'd never allow myself sold,
And I wouldn't be you—cold—heartless—
For all of your beauty and gold!

A NIGHT IN JUNE.

Swinging,
Clinging,
Roses bending slow;
Dancing,
Prancing,
Moonbeams come and go;
Shining,
Shining,
Dew-drops tender glow;
Sighing,
Dying,
Zephyrs breathing low.

Swinging,
Clinging,
Hands as white as snow;
Dancing,
Prancing,
Eyes that gleam and glow;
Shining,
Shining,
Making my heart sore;
Sighing,
Dying,
For love of Leonore.

BEYOND.

Beyond the driving storm
And lightnings flashing in the face of night;
There lies, poor soul, a haven fair and warm,
And light—thy light!

Beyond the thorns so sharp
In a garden fair where every flower grows;
You'll find, led by the tinkling of love's harp,
A rose—thy rose!

Beyond this life so fleet
There is a place to lay all burdens down;
And at thy Saviour's all-forgiving feet,
A crown—thy crown!

A SONG OF THE RAIN.

Hush!
Don't yer hear that patter
On the roofin' uv your house,
Like the fairies wus a-havin' of a dance?
Don't you recognize that sound?
Law! I'll interjuice yer, then;
Ho, Rain-drop! this is Mister Igno-Rance!

List!

Don't yer hear that lily sighin'
In a soft an' sweet content,
As the rain-drops wash the dust frum out her eye?
An' she likes it. Don't yer hear
Her crooning slowly with the breeze,
Ter hush the baby rain-drop's timid cry?

Look!

Don't yer see that rose a-flirtin'
With the elfin uv the rain,
An' a hidin' hin' the trellis, jes' ter tease?
While she shakes the dewy kisses
Frum her crimson velvet lips,
Jes' ter set that elfin beggin' on his knees.

Hush!

Don't yer hear that bird a singin'
Like he'd split his little self,
All a-bendin' an' a-swayin' in the trees?
Sassy thing! hear him mockin'
An' a twittin' uv the rain:
"Mister Rain-drop, yer can't hurt me!"

List!

Don't yer hear the rustle
Uv the green fern's dainty dress,
As she's singin' uv a song so sweet an' low?
"Oh, once I primped my tresses
In the brooklet's lookin'-glass,
Mister Rain-drop, I think we've met before!"

Look!

Don't yer see that 'brella
Comin' walkin' down the street?
I wonder who's a hidin' 'neath its brim!
Thar, he kissed her, an' she's blushin',
An the look that's in her eyes
Shows she thinks thar's nothin' livin' 'ceptin' him.

Law!

Don't yer see the earth a-swellin'
An' a puck'rin' up her lips,
Ter meet the rain-drop's kisses comin' sweet?
Whole creation's glad they're livin'
Jes' ter see the daisies' eyes
Twinklin' up like drowned starlets at yer feet!

BEST.

There, there, dear heart, why mourn so?
Lay that poor throbbing head
Upon my breast and cry it out;
Yes, dear, they say he's dead!
Who knows what might have happened
In some far distant day
To grieve you both? And this, God willed
That he should pass away.

Who knows but in the future
Mayhap his love grown cold—
There, there, don't start and tremble,
Poor, sad, grief-stricken soul!
Better that this should happen now,
Though your heart be torn with pain,
Than you should find that love was dead
And could not live again!

But now you know he loves you,
(Though he lies cold to-day,)
That you love him and know and feel
That he is yours alway.

I know it's hard, my dear one,
There now—let's go to rest.
Though the thorn is sharp, remember, dear,
That God knows best.

AFFINITY.

Our eyes first met and lingered, then it seemed
An old friend found, hand clung to hand;
Light sprung from soul to answering light that beamed
And seemed to know and understand.

Who knows but what in some pale trembling star,
Whose ray sifts through the mists above
To add its light to those that gleam afar,
Our souls, mayhap, did live and love?

A LIFE.

A tiny feather, snowy white,
Floated by one day;
It had doubtless dropped from an angel's wing
As he crossed the milky way.

It floated near,
It floated far;
It basked in the light of the evening star,
Till Life found it, crowned it,
And it lived.

A lovely maiden wandered through
The garden of Life, which seems
But one vast field o'erscattered
With roses sweet and dreams.
She wandered here,
She wandered there;
She twined white roses in her hair,
Till love found her, crowned her,
And she loved.

A woman fair on the sea of Love,
Set sail from her maiden land,
And Faith was the captain of the ship,
And 'twas steered by Hope's own hand;
But winds and waves
Beset this bark,
And oft 'twas light, still oftener dark.
Thus Sorrow found her, crowned her,
And she wept.

A weary woman dreaming sat,
She dreamed of the long ago,
Of star heights gained, of falls to depths
Of misery and woe.
Yet still she dreams
Of the long ago, –
Of laughter, tears, of joy, but lo!
Death has found her, crowned her—
She is dead!

THE WAY PAP READ IT.

Pap was readin' o' Riley's poems
And this was the way he read:
"When the frost is on your punkin,"
Then he stopped and scratched his head.

"Didn't think he'd be a-makin'
Fun o' gray hairs," he softly said;
"Yas, the frost is on my punkin,
But I'd ruther he'd call it head."

THE VOICES.

When God's sweet stars
Through twilight's bars,
Look down on the world at rest;
With twinkling hearts
Shine forth as parts
Of Heaven's jeweled breast;
When softly steals
The distant peals
Of a mighty thunder's roll;
From what dim sphere
For smile or tear,
Come these voices to my soul?

When darkness falls
Some spirit calls,
And will not give me rest;
O Night, thou Queen!
Toward me lean,
And take me to thy breast:
These voices speak—
My soul is weak.

I know not their command;
Oh, for some light—
Oh, to hear aright—
That I may understand!

COMPENSATION.

Did you ever hear of the rivalry
Between the Night and the Day,
For the love of that gorgeous monster,
The Sun, in his bright array?
Day was a dashing damsel
In crimson dress and gold—
And she loved the Sun's caresses,
So daring, bright and bold!

Night was a tender maiden,
Retiring, pure and sweet—
She loved the Sun with mind content
To worship at his feet.
Now the Sun—the heartless rascal—
Chose Day to be his own;
And thus it is until this time,
Sweet Night weeps all alone.

But methinks the bride regretted
The choice the Sun had made,
For on the face of each fair flower
His kisses are often laid;
Methinks he too regretted,
For I note with sad surprise,
How his last ray often lingers
For a glimpse into Night's sweet eyes!

And Day sees this, and is jealous,
And she flaunts her golden dress
Back into the face of Night,
E're she sinks with the Sun to rest;
But Night, though weary-hearted,
Puts her great grief away;
And soothes and heals the sorrows made
By the Sun and the careless Day.

And many's the drooping flower
She holds with gentle grace,
Till they open their eyes and upward look
Into Night's sweet, tender face;
And many's the little dew-drops, faint,
From the Sunlight's rude caress,
Smile and shine when they feel themselves
Pressed to Night's great breast!

The stars look down with shining eyes
  On the world at peace and rest,
And God looks down on Night and smiles
  For He knows that Night is best;
For near her heart millions of souls
  Have lost all grief, all care,
And up from the soul of the Universe
  Comes one grand, silent prayer!

A TOWN "TACK."

Yer hear folks talk o' the country,
  Uv its calm an' peaceful life,
An' uv how it beats the city
  With all its noise an' strife;
But I guess I've rusticated
  Several days by loafin' 'round
In that "calm an' peaceful valley;"
  But fer goodness—gemme town!

I wanter kinder be whar
  I kin *see* a thing o' two,
An' hear uv all the 'tic'lars,
  If thar's anything that's new

I wanter hear the whistles
An' the wagon's rumbling sound,
An' all them noises an' fusses
What you hear about a town.

Some folks may think it very nice,
Ter live out whar they be
Alone with mother Nature; but lor!
The way they run ter see
When anything is passin',
(Most break their necks I'm bound,)
An' wonder what an' who it is
A-going into town.

I stayed out thar a week myself
Ten year er more ago;
One mornin' I cum walkin' in—
('Bout twenty mile er so;)
An' right here now you'll fin' me,
I'm allus loafin round;
The country may suit *some* folks;
But, by gum! gemme town!

AN EASTER SONG.

Bright was the sky;
From Calvary's brow had sped the gloom,
Though the quivering earth fast threatened doom;
But from our Saviour's close-sealed tomb
Hark! hear the cry

Of glad surprise!
A glorious song through Heaven doth ring!
Sing! sun, moon, stars, together sing
Loud praises, for your Lord and king
To-day doth rise!

With each breath
Let joyous sound of praises ring!
Sing! heart, lips, tongue, forever sing,
For there doth rise with Christ our King,
Our soul from death!

THE BREEZE.

The soft, cool breeze, with gentle breath,
At eventide, the old day's death
  Doth mourn with pensive sigh;
Even the stars look pale and dim
As if they fain would weep for him,
  While the breeze sobs passing by.

It blows the rose leaves to my face,
It gently lifts and fans the lace
  About my throat—caresses my hair;
But why should it mourn the day that's dead
With the faint stars hanging overhead?
  For the day has gone where there's never a care.

Its gentle touch upon my brow
Is sweet and restful; then and now
  Upon my lips a kiss lets fall;
Ah, breeze, sweet breeze! you'd fain deceive
And then you'd leave me alone to grieve,
  I'm afraid you're a flirt and make love to all!

When Heaven's lamps glow in the skies,
Resembling countless blinking eyes,
You steal a kiss from a maiden's cheek;
And yet you say you are constant—true!
Why, there's never a rose that would believe you!
There's never a violet would be so weak!

But, somehow, breeze, I hope my life
Will be more like you, heedless of strife
To calmly go on and rest at last;
Rose, violet,—all, for your stay pleads,
But into the future your journey leads,
And you came from the dear dead past!

SOMEBODY.

What care I if the day be dark
And from gloom no moment free?
With twilight comes sweet recompense,
Somebody still loves me!

What care I if life be drear
And burdens be my part?
Somebody's kiss at eventide
Will lift them from my heart!

What care I if the world be cold
And my pathway lie apart?
When well I know that I possess
Somebody's loving heart.

What though the cares that linger 'round
Press heavy on my breast?
Somebody's eyes will drown them all
And bring me peace and rest!

THE MEETING.

I tell yer what, yer orter been eround the other day
Ter our club an' heard jes' what we women had ter say;
Fer we hav' bout decided that fer *eighteen hundred years*
The men hav' been a-bossin' things in this 'ere "vale o' tears!"

An' now the time has cum ter stop, we've started on the wing—
An' yer jes' give us half a chance, an *won't* we make things sing!
Fer we've organized a club an' its political at that,
An' we talk o' things more samer than the latest style o' hat.

The Widow Simpkins, she was thar, an' in her best silk gown:
I'll tell yer (though in confidence,) she's too smart fer *this* town;
An' little Mrs. Pickett, an' Dr. Grayson's wife,
The Skinner girls (they've seen *at least* some forty years o' life)!

But oh, we had a rousin' time an' voted all we'us able,
An if the motions didn't suit, we laid 'em on the table;
An' thar sum uv 'ems lyin' yet, an' as to why an' how—
Why we all talked out in meetin' an' we broke up in a row!

Oh well, yer couldn't jes' expect a *woman* not ter talk,
It seems ter cum so nat'ral like, an' then fer us ter walk
Ter that 'ere meetin' onct a week, an' *not* ter hav' our say?
Why we'd ruther keep it organized an' break up every day!

Fer if the men keep bossin' 'an a makin' o' the laws,
Why all we kin do is ter talk an' plead the woman's cause!

An' maybe 'twould be best ter stop, but then yer must allow
That its jes' lots o' solid fun, ter break up in a row!

MARGUERITE.

'Twas years ago
On a foreign shore.
Could ever heart love more?
My dainty, witching Marguerite,
Pure and fragile, pale and sweet,
And oh, I loved her so!

When a thousand stars
Lit up the bars
And gleamed across the bay,
When she drew the bow across the string,
And the violin sang like a living thing,
She played my heart away.

But then, my friend,
You'll guess the end:
She left this darkened land,
Up where the stars together sing
Praises to our Lord and king,
She dwells with an angel band.

My Marguerite,
So fair, so sweet!
Some day our souls shall meet,
For the Angel of Death to me shall say:
"Come, weary mortal, come this way,"
And I'll see you, my own, my sweet.

And then how sweet
My weary feet
Will rest on that sacred sod,
And a touch of the string from that golden bow,
Will set my heart aflame, aglow,
And play my soul to God.

REWARDED.

When the sunshine showers gold
From the vaulted blue above you,
And you have friends both new and old
With hearts that seem to love you,
In your life I have no place,
You shake your head with careless grace,
See not the pleading in my face,
Think not that I love you.

But when the sunshine turns to gloom
And skies are dark above you,
And in the hearts you find no room
Of those you thought had loved you,
Ah! then the way my heart shall find,
Hoping, waiting, love's sure sign
Will win you, sweetheart, make you mine,
For then you'll *know* I love you.

OL' ABE.

Yer know ol' Abe Skinflinter?
Wall, whether you do er not,
He's that lantern-jawed ol' hoosier
Livin' down at Possum Trot;
But if yer've ever knowed him
Yer'll remember, show's yer born,
Fer he's the onorest contraried creature
Yer ever set two eyes on.

Whenever it would rain a spell
An' kinder soak the groun',
(Jes' give a real good seasonin'),
Ol' Abe 'ud stalk eroun':

"It 'pears ter me hit'll never stop!"
(As mad as any Turk),
"I'd set this very day o' days
Ter do sum special work."

Then maybe fer a day o' two
It wouldn't rain er drop,
But lovely kind uv weather
Yer'd meet him pipin' hot:
"Why folks can't hav' a drap er two
Is a mystery ter me;
I can't do nary scrap er work
'Tel it jes' rains, yer see."

If ol' Abe gits ter heaven
Through them gates er gold an' pearl,
He'll be mighty apt ter *slip* in
In the midst er rush an' whirl.
I ken see ol' Abe er struttin'
'Round them streets o' jasper bright,
Er askin' all the angels why
They don't hav' 'lectric light.

An' he soon 'ud be inquirin'
Why they didn't hav' a lark
An' hav' a few stray niggers 'round
Ter play the white folks' harp,
An' 'bout the Tree o' Life he'd ask,
(Jes' like ol' Abe 'twould be):
"St. Peter, don't you think yon spot
More suited ter this tree?"

He never yet wuz satisfied—
Never in his life.
One day he went off sum'eres
And brought him back er wife.
Satisfied now? I guess not,
I heard him mutterin' o' 'sperience schools,
An' wonderin' why the Lord did make
Menfolks such blear-eyed fools.

MY HEART'S DESIRE.

One day within the garden of my heart,
I found a beauteous bud but half revealed;
For fear that some less gentle hand might hurt,
I kept the garden-gate close-locked and sealed.

But lo! one day the bud of my desire
Was blighted. With moan I checked my heart's loud cry
Against God's will, and then, with tearless eye,
I sat and moaned and sighed and wondered why.

Oft 'gainst our own desires He balks our way,
Lest we should disappointed be and sad;
He saves us from ourselves, and blossoms sweet
Spring up about our path and make us glad.

. . . . .

One day I oped the garden of my heart,
Half trembling. My soul her garb of sorrow slips,
For there more lovely, purer than the old,
A flower, new, leaned trembling to my lips.

WHEN I DIE.

When I die,
I would some hands could cross mine on my breast,
O'er my poor, pulseless heart, cold and at rest,
And say: "These hands did what they thought was best,"
When I die.

When I die,
I would some eye above my coffin-lid
Could free its fountain's pent-up tears long hid,
For joy that I lived as my Master bid,
When I die.

When I die,
I would some lip that oft had pressed my own
Could, trembling, kiss mine once again alone
And whisper, " 'Gainst His will you ne'er made moan,"
When I die.

When I die,
I would some quivering voice to me might say:
"The faults are here, beloved, but now, to-day,
We'll bury them beneath a voiceless clay,"
When I die.

When I die,
I would some heart would moan out to the night
For loss of mine, but bear His will aright,
Resolved to meet me in that land of light,
When I die.

But e'er I die,
I pray some loving words to me be said,
Some benedictions placed upon my head,
For living hearts are warmer than the dead,
Ere I die.

SINCE MARY WENT AWAY.

Sumtimes I feel so res'less-like since Mary went away,
Seems like I don't kno' what ter do; but almos' every day
When I hear the birds a-singin' and the sunlight seems so glad,
I wonder how they hav' the heart with me a-feelin' sad.

When is she a-comin' back? Why, never; fer yer see
She's quite a little distance off, away frum you an' me,
But I allus feel she's watchin' me with ol'-time lovin' kere,
For Mary is in Heaven an' Heaven's behin' them clouds up there.

Then when the sun's a-settin' 'mong them clouds o' red an' gold
An' raps 'em all about him, like he's feelin' kinder cold,
An' the dusky shadders lengthen' an' the whip-per-will's sad song
Cums faint across the meador an' goes echoin' along;

I feel jes' like I want 'er die an' go where Mary be,
'Tel the stars they cum a-peepin', looks so lovin'-like at me.
Then I feel a long sight better, an' they whisper ter me, too:
"Mary sends her love an' says she's waitin' there fer you."

I allus git up airly, when the fust faint streaks o' red
Cum a-clim'in' o'er the hilltops, an' the night is almos' dead,
An' the breeze begins a-stirrin'; day has hired it, no doubt,
Ter git up every mornin' an' blow the lights o' heaven' out;

Then I wait until they all are gone excep' one little light
An' waft a hundred kisses—send 'em by the dyin' night,
Whisper, "Giv' 'em all ter Mary, say I'm tryin' ter find the way,"
An' yer don't kno' how much better I'm a-feelin' all that day.

JUNE-HEARTED.

Oh, I'm jes' so tarnal happy,
Don't kere if the birds don't tune,
Don't kere if the flowers ain't bloomin',
My heart's a perfect June.
Don't kere if the sky is weepin',
Don't kere if her eyes do smart,
Don't kere 'bout the mists a-risin',
Fer its lovely in my heart.

Why, ol' fellow, what's the matter?
Don't turn pale, tremble, start!
I ain't crazy, I'm jes' happy,
Fer there's summer in my heart.

Wanter know jes' what's the matter?
Listen close, then—here it be:
Las' night, with the stars a-listenin',
Molly said she wuz lovin' me!

THE STORY OF THE WHITE ROSE.

'Twas first beneath a Southern sky my bud unfolded.
When?
Ah well, I count the years by stars, not suns,
But e'en had it for centuries been,
Still would my heart grow faint and quiver with the memory—and regret.
My home was in a garden where all flowers dwelt:
The violet with wondering eyes gazed up
Upon the stately lily's pallid brow;
And star-eyed daisies with bended heads
And lids low-drooped to hide the tender light,
There listened to the wooing of the breeze.

'Twas there the first rays of a Southern sun
Each morning kissed me softly on the brow
And bade me wake;

And I was glad 'twas light again,
And gently shook the dew
From out my eyes, and looked to see what new
Glory had been added to the world.

Then would I listen—listen—till a step I heard—
And then a face would come, before which
All other glories paled!
And she would press my crimson lips
A-quiver, to her cheek, and tell me of her love.

"Red rose, thou shalt go to him some day
And tell him how I love him! God knows,
And thou;
Thou shalt win his love for me!
Thy beauty shall delight his eye—
Thy sweetness, brighter make his way—
Thou happy rose!"

Then would the evening shadows fall, and soon,
Cradled in the moonbeam's arms,
Lulled by the soft song of sweet mother Night,
I'd fall asleep and dream.
I'd dream of how I brought his love to her,
And how we three dwelt gloriously
And forever in a star!

One sad day, the footstep that I listened for
Fell not upon my longing ear;
Oh, how long a day it was!
Once more the night-wind swept her harp
And whispered nothings to the stars;
Once more a-down the shade of twilight's bars
Night's song fell soft, and dreamed I of we three

But, oh, it was so cold, and dark, and drear!
Until I felt a touch, warm, like
The falling dew upon my face;
I open'd my eyes and looked up into hers.
Her face was as the lily's now,
And soft the dew fell from her eyes;
And as she pressed me to her cheek,
I could not help but shrink, so cold it was.

"My rose," she whispered brokenly,
"I can not live without his smile—
Without the warmth of his great love,
But I can die!
And thou wilt bring me there his love
Somewhere beyond the sky."

. . . . .

I must have swooned for I did not see
The stars that night,
Nor did I hear the whisp'rings of the breeze;
But when I woke I felt so numb and chill.
The place was dim and perfect quiet reigned;
Wee lights, but not the stars,
Gleamed here and there, and looking up I found
I lay against her face.

But oh, how changed!
It was a broken flower that the storm had killed.
The lily and the violet—the daisy, all were there,
But not as I:
For I was up where I might touch her lips;
Though they gave no answering kiss to mine.

Closed were those eyes
That had so oft caressed me with their tender glance.
I felt myself caught up
And burning kisses showered o'er my face!
A hot rain fell upon my brow!
Then knew I 'twas our loved one,
For this he said to me:

"Ah, rose, I only would that I were you
That I might lay my lips against her face
And go with her into the other world!
That I might lay my head upon her heart
Although it does not beat!
But you will hear my messages to her—
You'll tell her how I love her, and how sweet
The grave would be if only 'twere with her!
And tell her when that day of days doth come,
On wings of love my spirit swift shall fly
To be with thee and her!"

Then slowly—slowly—I felt the red blood leave my cheek
Drawn out by kisses from his lips;
And when he placed me o'er her pulseless heart,
Bidding me there remain until that day,
My brow was scarce less waxen
Than her hand which held me there.

. . . . .

Then came a time when all was dark, and cold,
And drear; I could not see the stars,
Nor any glory of the world; how long that was
I know not.

But once I felt my heart expand
As though to burst some prison bars,
And lo, I saw again!

Above me gleamed the selfsame stars—
Around me all the glory shone—
But at my feet there lay a grave;
Gone were the blushes from my cheek,
And my brow
Might e'en rival the stately lily's now!

Each day our lover comes to me,
And up from the depths of her dark, narrow home
I bring her love to him;
And all those tender messages he pours into my ear,
And those kisses on my lips,
I carry down—down—to the very heart of her.

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